

OLC 78-0151
3 January 1978

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Loch Johnson on 19 December 1977

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1. (IUO) I attended a meeting today of Loch Johnson, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence staff, with Mr. Herb Hetu, A/DCI/PA [redacted] Deputy Assistant for Public Affairs, and [redacted] Assistant for Plans and Programs, Public Affairs, which was requested by Mr. Johnson to provide background for the hearings on CIA's relationships with the press which the Subcommittee on Oversight has scheduled.

2. (IUO) Mr. Hetu described his role and responsibilities in dealing with members of the U.S. press, other information media and U.S. institutions. He made clear that his office deals openly with the U.S. Press. Mr. Johnson noted that U.S. newsmen have told him that during background briefings they received at the Agency the briefers pointed out specific information in the foreign intelligence field which they were lacking: The message was clear to the newsmen that they should try to develop this information for the Agency. Mr. Hetu explained the background briefings and emphasized that there is positively no "tasking" of U.S. newsmen or other representatives of public information media to meet Agency requirements. Mr. Berend emphasized that he has set up all the background briefings of U.S. newsmen for the last three years and he is unaware of any "tasking" being levied. He acknowledged that such "tasking" may have been the practice in the past, however, current policy is clear and such practice is prohibited.

3. (IUO) In response to a query from Mr. Johnson, Mr. Hetu stated that releases by his office are made to about sixty or more U.S. newsmen and U.S. news services concurrently and not to selected newsmen. The policy also is to respond to queries from the media wherever possible and try to explain the reasons why certain queries involving sensitive matters cannot be answered. Mr. Hetu added that most newsmen accept the explanation.

4. (IUO) Mr. Hetu gave Mr. Johnson an information kit prepared as a handout by his office which contains unclassified material on the Agency. He also offered to provide Mr. Johnson any further information on the operations of his office.

[redacted]
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Assistant Legislative Counsel

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